



Switzerland

Closing Statement, 23 February 2021, UNEA5.1

Delivered by H.E. Ambassador Franz Perrez, Ambassador, Head of International Affairs Division, Federal Office for the Environment

Switzerland has been advocating since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic that multilateralism must not stop, decision-making has to continue, and Nairobi cannot remain silent, as environmental degradation does not halt during these times.

This UNEA has proven that virtual negotiations are possible and consensus can be reached. While we welcome the many delegations that have constructively engaged in the negotiation process, we are also concerned by the growing tensions between regional groups. In the preparation of UNEP5.2 and UNEP@50, we should strive to overcome these tensions and allow for constructive engagement.

Switzerland is pleased, that this online UNEA has approved a political message. This shows that the process for developing a political message can also be pursued in a virtual setting. We commend Norway for the transparent and inclusive process in the preparation of these messages. While the messages are distinct in form and content from a Ministerial Declaration, they send an important political signal that governments care and that they are committed to jointly advance green recovery and the protection of the environment and that Nairobi, the global Capital of environmentalism, matters!

Switzerland supports the new MTS as it speaks to the core mandate and UNEP's comparative advantage in the landscape of environmental actors. Switzerland congratulates UNEP once again on the transparent, open and inclusive process towards developing the MTS and the Programme of Work and Budget. By reaching out to all capitals early in 2020 already and consulting us, UNEP has created ownership in shaping a document that serves as a guidance for UNEP, but inherently is a product we, the Member States, had shaped over the course of the last year. The goals for UNEP are clear, now it is upon the Member States to provide the necessary means to UNEP to fulfill its task by contributing their fair share to the Environment Fund.

With respect to strengthening action for nature, we have accomplished a lot over the last 50 years. The achievements of UNEP are impressive – we look forward to celebrating UNEP's 50th anniversary next year when we hope to meet in person for the second part of this UNEA and the special UNEA session. The commemoration of UNEP@50 is an important milestone and should be celebrated at the highest possible level.

We need the political will and courage to address the current environmental challenges. The coming months provide us with the chance to achieve substantive progress. Key elements could be the decision to launch negotiations for a convention on plastics, to establish a science-policy body for chemicals and waste, to take on emerging topics or to develop guidelines to improve the sustainability of the mineral resource and infrastructure sector.

We have two occasions, to achieve these steps. First, we have UNEA 5.2 and the special UNEA session in Nairobi, and then we will have Stockholm+50 in Stockholm, which will recall the historical milestone of the 1972 environment conference.

Switzerland stands committed to make these occasions a success. We look forward to working together with you all be it in a virtual, hybrid, or preferably physical setting.